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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 005185

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM TUNIS DATED JANUARY 5, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ALGIERS, CAIRO, PARIS, RABAT,
TRIPOLI, NOUAKCHOTT, MOSCOW, TEL AVIV IS REPEATED TO YOU:
QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS0068

DEPT PASS DOD

CODEL ZABLOCKI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS

SUBJECT: RESUME OF CODEL ZABLOCKI MEETING WITH PRIME
MINISTER NOUIRA JAN 3 IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

1. CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE, OPENED MEETING BY EXPRESSING HIS
DELEGATION'S PLEASURE AT BEING ABLE TO VISIT TUNISIA AND
BY REFERRING TO THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN
THE U.S. AND TUNISIA. HE EXPLAINED THAT PURPOSE OF
CODEL'S TRIP TO TUNISIA AND OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES
WAS TO EXAMINE WAYS WHICH BILATERAL RELATIONS MIGHT BE
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STRENGTHENED AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS CONCERNING SEARCH FOR PEACE
IN MIDDLEEAST. CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
DELEGATION NOTED SIGNIFICANCE WHICH USG ATTACHES TO EGYPTIAN
PRESIDENT SADAT'S RECENT INITIATIVE AND TO EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI
NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDER WAY. THEY ALSO STRESSED IMPORTANCE
WHICH USG GIVES TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS
AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ALL ARAB COUNTRIES COULD GIVE

PUBLIC SUPPORT TO SADAT AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE VARIOUS QUESTIONS POSED TO PRIME MINISTER BY CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI AND OTHER MEMBERS OTHHWCODEL.

A. SADAT'S INITIATIVE IN OPENING TALKS WITH ISRAEL. NOUIRA SAID TUNISIA NOT ONLY SUPPORTS SADAT'S INITIATIVE IN OPENING TALKS WITH ISRAEL BUT VIEWS IT AS "THE ONLY WAY" TOWARDS PEACE. AS TO POLITICAL FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, ?ONLY SOLUTION APPEARS TO BE CREATION OF A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT STATE ALTHOUGH DETAILS OF PALESTINIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER STATES IN AREA WILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN PROGRESSIVE STAGES. THIS RELATIONSHIP WILL HAVE TO BE DECIDED BY THE PEOPLES DIRECTLY CONCERNED, AND STATES OUTSIDE OF THE IMMEDIATE GEOGRAPHIC AREA, SUCH AS TUNISIA, CANNOT MAKE THIS DECISION. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROPOSALS TO MERGE PALESTINE WITH JORDAN ARE NOT POLITICALLY REALISTIC. AT PRESENT THERE ARE SOME 800,000 JORDANIANS LIVING ALONGSIDE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME

NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN. IT IS ENVISAGED THAT APPROXIMATELY 1,200,000 PALESTINIANS LIVE IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK WOULD RETURN TO THE AREA IF THEY WERE ALLOWED TO DO SO UNDER PEACEFUL CONDITIONS. THIS WOULD MEAN REUNIFIED JORDAN WOULD BE COMPOSED OF 800,000 JORDANIANS AND SOME TWO MILLION PALESTINIANS. THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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CODEL DRAW ITS OWN CONCLUSIONS AS TO WHETHER THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOW AQCEPT SUCH A PALESTINIAN PREDOMINANCE. CONTINUING FROM THIS POINT, NOUIRA URGED THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO POLITICAL IMPERATIVE THAT PALESTINIAN PEOPLE BE ALLOWED TO HAVE THEIR OWN IDENTITY WHICH COULD NOT INVOLVE DIRECT ASSOCIATION WITH JORDAN.

B. PROPOSALS THAT ARAB COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE ISRAEL. NOUIRA SAID THAT TUNISIA HAD RECOGNIZED REALITY OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE MANY YEARS AGO BUT, WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER ARAB STATES, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO OBLIGE ONE COUNTRY TO RECOGNIZE ANOTHER. HE NOTED THAT FORMAL RECOGNITION IS OFTEN ARRIVED AT IN PROCESS OF STAGES AND HE MENTIONED THAT THE US HAD WAITED MANY YEARS BEFORE FORMALLY RECOGNIZING THE SOVIET UNION, ALTHOUGH US WAS IN TOUCH WITH USSR LONG BEFORE. SADAT FOR HIS PART IS TRYING TO RESOLVE THIS QUESTION BUT PROBLEMS STILL EXISTS. ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL IS RELATIVELY MINOR ONE AND CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED WHEN SOLUTION IS FOUND TO BROADER MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. THE U.S. IS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN ANYONE ELSE TO HELP IN FINDING A SOLUTION AND HE URGED

THAT U.S. SEEK TO LEAD ISRAEL TO MAKE ESSENTIAL CONCESSIONS
ON PALESTINE ISSUE.

C. TUNISWAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

NOUIRA NOTED THAT WHILE TUNISIA HAS MADE IMPRESSIVE
ECOMOMIC PROGRESS IN RECENT YEARS, REACHING POINT
WHERE PER CAPITA INCOME AVERAGES APPROXIMATELY \$750 A
YEAR, TUNISIA STILL HAS MUCH WORK TO DO BEFORE IT CAN
ACHIEVE ITS GOAL OF ECONOMIC WELL BEING FOR ALL OF ITS
CITIZENS. HE NOTED THAT TUNISIA HAD MADE ITS CHOICE FOR
A FREE, OPEN AND LIBERAL "MIDDLE CLASS" SOCIETY AND THAT THIS
CHOICE HAD NOT PLEASED EVERYBODY. SOME PEOPLE, BOTH IN
TUNISIA AND ELSEWHERE, DO NOT AGREE WITH THIS COURSE TUNISIA
HAS CHARTED AND ARE DOING EVERYTHING TO OPPOSE IT.
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TUNISIA CAN AND WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, HE ADDED, IF IT HIS
THE COOPERATION AND SUPPORT OF ITS FRIENDS. HE COMPLAINED THAT
UNFORTUNATELY SOME COUNTRIES , INCLUDING THE US, NOW SEEMED INCLINED
TO PENALIZE TUNISIA FOR THE PROGRESS IT HAD MADE
RATHER THAN CONTINUING TO OFFER MATERIAL AS WELL AS
MORALE SUPPORT WHICH IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.
HE LIKENED TUNISIA'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AT MOMENT TO
THAT OF AN AIRPLANE IN TAKEOFF, SAYING THAT GREATER
AND NOT LESS ECONOMIC SUPPORT IS NEEDED AT SUCH A CRUCIAL
STAGE. TUNISIA'S FIFTH ECONOMIC PLAN, NOW IN ITS SECOND
YEAR, FORESEES SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY
1981 BUT THIS GOAL CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT INCREASED
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE WEST AND PARTICULARLY FROM
THE U.S. NOUIRA NOTED THAT TUNISIA IS POOR IN RESOURCES,
HAVING LITTLE PETROLEUM, GAS OR MINERALS WHICH IT CAN
EXPLOIT TO FINANCE ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT. "WE HAVE OUR WILL
TO SUCCEED, HOWEVER, AND THIS IS OUR GREATEST RESOURCE,"
HE SAID.

D. INTERNAL SITUATION IN TUNISIA. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION
ABOVE INTERNAL RESISTANCE BEING MET BY GOVERNMENT TO
ITS CHOSEN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COURSE, NOUIRA ADMITTED
THERE WAS SOME DOMESTIC OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES
BUT THAT THIS WAS MOSTLY "NOURISHED" FROM THE OUTSIDE.
TUNISIA WANTS TO CREATE A MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETY IN TUNISIA
BASED ON STABILITY, BUT TUNISIA FINDS ITSELF IN AN AREA
WHICH IS ROCKED NOT BY EARTHQUAKES ANKOTMOY "CELEBRIAL
INSTABILITY." IT IS AGAINST THESE DANGERSWHICH TUNISIA
MUST PROTECT ITSELF. NOUIRA CONCLUDED WITH EXPRESSION
THAT TUNISIA'S BEST DEFENSE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG
ECONOMY MEETING THE JUST NEEDS OF ALL.
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E. SOVIET SHIPS AT BIZERTE. PRIME MINISTER WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT ACCESS OF SOVIET SHIPS TO MENZEL BOURGUIBA FACILITIES AT BIZERTE WHICH HAS RECENTLY COME TO CODEL'S ATTENTION. SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY, NPOUIRA STATED THAT "NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM AND THIS INCLUDES HARBORS AND PORTS." NRETURNING TO SERIOUS TONE, NOUIRA DESCRIBED HOW TUNISIA HAS OFFERED THE MENZEL-BOURGUIBA DOCKYARD FACILITIES TO ITS FRIENDS, INCLUDING THE U.S., NOTING THAT THEY HAD NOT RESPONDED TO THESE INITIATIVES. HE EXPLAINED THAT BECAUSE OF NEED TO KEEP WORKERS AND FACILITIES MORE UTILIZED, TUNISIA WASFORCED TO ACCEPT OTHER CLIENTS EVEN IF THIS INCLUDED THE SOVIET UNION.

F. TUNISIA/LIBYA RELATIONS. RESPONDING TO QUESTION CONCERNING TUNISIAN DISPUTE WITH LIBYA OVER CONTINENTAL SHELF, PRIME MINISTER RECALLED THAT LIBYA HAS RECENTLY AGREED TO SUBMIT ISSUE TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE AT THE HAGUE. TIME CAN ONLY TELL, HE SAID, IF WE SHALL SEE THIS WORK.

G. ROLE OF GROUP OF 77. NOUIRA TENDED TO DISCOUNT THE ROLE PLAYED TO DATE BY GROUP OF 77 IN RESOLVING MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. HE SAID GROUP IS NOT HOMOGENEOUS AND REPRESENTS MANY CONFLICTING INTERESTS. GROUP HAS GIVEN TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO TAKING POSITIONS ON PRINCIPLE RATHER THAN FINDING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS. UNDER INFLUENCE OF TUNISIA AND YUGOSLAVIA, HOWEVER, RECENT EXPERIENCE GIVES HOPE THAT GROUP OF 77 MAY BECOME A MORE REALISTIC AND PRACTICAL BODY IN FUTURE.

I. WESTERN SAHARA. PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBED DISPUTE OVER WESTERN SAHARA AS BEING SERIOUS AND HE WARNED IT COULD EVOLVE IN VERY DANGEROUS WAY. THIS IS A PROBLEM NOT JUST FOR PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED BUT FOR ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. SPEAKING ONLY HALF IN JUST, NOUIRA CONCLUDED
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THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD SEEK NOT TO CREATE ANOTHER PROBLEM UNTIL THE FIRST AND MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE EAST IS RESOLVED. THERE AGAIN, HE SAID, US CAN PLAY KEY ROLE.
MULCAHY UNQUOET VANCE

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